

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended): A fixing apparatus, comprising:
 - a fixing roller, having a middle portion and both end portions in an ~~axis~~-axial direction thereof, the middle portion being smaller than the both end portions in a diameter;
 - a pressing roller, rotated by being brought into press contact with the fixing roller so that a press contact portion is formed;
 - an exfoliating member, exfoliating a sheet-like record medium from a surface of the fixing roller after the record medium is passed through the press contact portion; and
 - restricting members, provided at both end portions of the exfoliating member, and brought into contact with the surface of the fixing roller so that an interval between the surface of the fixing roller and the exfoliating member is restricted,

wherein both end portions of the fixing roller extend beyond respective end portions of the pressing roller in the axial direction, such that the extended end portions of the fixing roller are outside the press contact portion, and

wherein the restricting members are brought into contact with the extended end portions of the fixing roller which are outside the press contact portion.

2. (currently amended): The fixing apparatus as set forth in claim 1, wherein an outer ~~side-edge~~ portion of each of the restricting members is arranged ~~on an outer side~~ outside of each of both end edge portions of the fixing roller in the axial direction.

3. (original): The fixing apparatus as set forth in claim 1, wherein a middle portion of each of the restricting members in an axis direction thereof is brought into contact with each of both end edge portions of the fixing roller.

4. (currently amended): A fixing apparatus, comprising:
a fixing roller, having a middle portion and both end portions in an axis direction thereof, the middle portion being smaller than the both end portions in a diameter;
a pressing roller, rotated by being brought into press contact with the fixing roller so that a press contact portion is formed;
an exfoliating member, exfoliating a sheet-like record medium from a surface of the fixing roller after the record medium is passed through the press contact portion; and
restricting members, provided at both end portions of the exfoliating member, and brought into contact with the surface of the fixing roller so that an interval between the surface of the fixing roller ~~an and~~ the exfoliating member is restricted,
wherein an outer ~~side-edge~~ portion of each of the restricting members is arranged ~~on an outer side~~ outside of each of both end edge portions of the fixing roller in the axial direction.

5. (currently amended): A fixing apparatus, comprising:

a fixing roller, driven so as to rotate;

a pressing roller, rotated by being brought into press contact with the fixing roller so that a press contact portion is formed; and

an exfoliating member, exfoliating a sheet-like record medium from at least one of a surface of the fixing roller and a surface of the pressing roller after the record medium is passed through the press contact portion, and guiding the recording medium,

wherein the exfoliating member is provided on an upper side of an outlet of the press contact portion or a downstream side of an air flow from the outlet of the press contact portion;

wherein the exfoliating member has a notch hole for promoting the air flow surrounding the exfoliating member; and

wherein the exfoliating member is provided with a roller ~~rotated~~ that rotates in a moving direction of ~~moving~~ the record medium; ~~and~~

~~wherein, when the record medium contacts the roller, the record medium pushes against the roller to increase a gap between the exfoliating member and the fixing roller.~~

6. (original): The fixing apparatus as set forth in claim 5, wherein the roller is shaped in either an abacus bead or a star wheel.

7. (original): The fixing apparatus as set forth in claim 5, wherein the roller is comprised of a synthetic resin.

8. (original): The fixing apparatus as set forth in claim 5, wherein a surface of the roller has a water repellency.

9. (previously presented): The fixing apparatus as set forth in claim 5, wherein the fixing roller comprises a heater.

10. (currently amended): An apparatus, comprising:
a first roller;
a second roller that rotates in a press-contact relationship with the first roller, wherein a recording medium passes between the first roller and the second roller;
an exfoliating member comprising an exfoliating device and a restricting member,
wherein the exfoliating device contacts the recording medium to remove the recording medium from a surface of the first roller after the recording medium passes between the first roller and the second roller,
wherein the restricting member contacts a first region of the surface of the first roller to control the distance between the surface of the first roller and the exfoliating device and does not contact a second region,
wherein the second roller contacts the second region of the surface of the first roller and does not contact the first region,
wherein both end portions of the first roller extend beyond respective end portions of the second roller in a longitudinal axial direction, such that the extended end portions of the first

~~roller comprises the second region of the surface is separated from~~ the first region of the surface when viewed along ~~a~~ the longitudinal axial direction of the first roller.

11. (previously presented): The apparatus as claimed in claim 10, wherein a diameter of the first roller at the second region is smaller than a diameter of the first roller at the first region.

12. (previously presented): The apparatus as claimed in claim 10, wherein the second roller is driven by the rotation of the first roller.

13. (previously presented): The apparatus as claimed in claim 10, wherein a side edge of the restricting member, which is farthest from the second region of the first roller is located farther from the second region than an end edge of the first roller.

14. (previously presented): The apparatus as claimed in claim 13, wherein the end edge of the first roller is substantially perpendicular to the longitudinal axial direction.

15. (previously presented): The apparatus as claimed in claim 10, wherein a middle portion of the restricting member, in the longitudinal axis direction of the first roller, contacts a side edge of the first roller,

wherein the side edge is angled with respect to the longitudinal axis direction.

16. (previously presented): The apparatus as claimed in claim 10, wherein the first roller is a fixing roller comprising a heater, and
wherein the second roller is a pressing roller.

17. (previously presented): The fixing apparatus as claimed in claim 4, wherein a middle portion of each of the restricting members contacts each of the end edge portions of the fixing roller.

18. (new) The fixing apparatus as set forth in claim 5, wherein the exfoliating member has a guide face for guiding the recording medium; and
wherein a projecting portion is formed on the guide face.